inhabitated villages in the country as per Census 2001. Out of this, 5,30,624 villages have been provided with Village Public Telephones (VPTs) facility. It has been decided to provide the VPT facility in all the remaining 62,977 uncovered villages also with subsidy support from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) in a period of two years.

(b) to (e) As per present policy of Unified Access Service Licences (UASL), there is no roll out obligation for Private Basic Service Operators (PBSOs) to provide telephones in rural areas. However, USO Fund is being extensively deployed for providing subsidy support to increase the penetration of telecom services in rural areas. Apart from BSNL, PBSOs are also participating in various schemes for provision of telecom facilities in rural areas under subsidy support of USOF though bidding process.

Information technology cities

1877. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to build 43 new information technology cities across the country to retain its status in the business and to be in a position to tap the huge surge in demand for IT enabled services over the next 10 years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposal has been cleared by the Planning Commission; and

(d) whether these new towns would provide steady supply of workers and generate employment for millions of people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) to (d) No, Sir. The names of these 43 cities have emerged as part of a study conducted by National Association of Software Companies (NASSCOM). There is no proposal before the Government to build these new Information Technology cities.

Subscriber base in rural areas

1878. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether to capture the new subscriber base in rural areas, the BSNL has since contemplated any measures;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the private sector telecom companies are ahead of BSNL in capturing the subscriber base in rural areas; and

(d) if so, the strategy to be adopted by BSNL to capture the rural sector and to provide better facilities than private telecom companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Sir, BSNL has adopted following measures to capture the new subscriber base in rural areas:—

(i) Order has been placed for procurement of 19.2 lakh lines of Wireless in Local Loop (WLL) equipment during 2008-09. On commissioning of this WLL equipment, new telephone connections are expected to be available on demand in most of the rural areas in the country. Out of 2,642 Short Distance Charging Area (SDCAs) in the country, 2,589 SDCAs have been covered by WLL as on 31.10.2008. Balance SDCAs are being covered progressively subject to techno-commercially viability.

(ii) Order has been placed for procurement of 23 million lines of GSM equipment.

(c) Yes, Sir. All the private telecom operators combined together have captured 3,18,35,183 subscriber base in rural areas during the current financial year (upto 31.10.2008) while BSNL has captured 7,13,580 subscriber base in the rural areas during the same period.

(d) Tender has been invited for 93 million lines of GSM equipment (phase VI) which shall be procured over the next three years and BSNL plans to cover villages having population more than 1000 by mobile services progressively in the next three years.

Jamming of MTNL mobile lines

1879. SHRI Y.P. TRIVEDI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that MTNL mobile subscribers of NCR including Mumbai and surroundings are facing difficulties due to jamming of MTNL mobile lines;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to provide quality services to mobile subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI JYOTIRADITYA MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Mobile network of MTNL Mumbai meets all the Quality of Service parameters of TRAI *viz.* call drop blocked call rate, call setup success rate, service provisioning, *etc.*

Mobile network of MTNL Delhi also meets the Quality of Service parameters of TRAI except Traffic Channel (TCH) congestion, which is now improving.

(c) Quality of service improvement is a continuous process. Measures like antenna tilting, addition of Base Transceiver Station (BTS), upgradation of BTS and optimization of network, provision of Indoor solution are under taken on a continuous basis to improve the mobile services. In MTNL, Delhi, some important networks elements like Intelligent Network (IN), Home Location Register (HLR) have been upgraded to improve the service. 78 numbers of BTS in Delhi and 29 numbers of BTS in Mumbai have been added since April, 2008.